

Szeged, 22, December 1956.

Professor J. LEDERBERG,
Department of Genetics,
University of Wisconsin,
MADISON 6, USA

Dear Professor Lederberg,

I wish to be apologized for being late in answering your kind letter of October 12, 1956. The fearful and tragic events in Hungary absorbed all of our interests. Now, I am getting recover the deep psychic shock caused by the latest incidents.

I agree with you in the question of terminology of S-R variation. No doubt, the discovery of S-R variation of enteric bacteria was a considerable success and a great part of confusion concerning the variation of this group of bacteria has been eliminated by the S-R notation. This notation might useful even in the case of some e capsulated bacteria. There are, however, some cases, e.g. M. tuberculosis where the S-R notation is not justified. That is why I felt uncertainty when I wanted to designate somehow the mutation of Bacillus megaterium. I am very grateful for your letter in which you helped me to overcome my hesitation how to term the mutation of Bacillus megaterium. I dropped the S-R notation in the final draft of my manuscript which will be published in Zbl.f.Bakt.Orig.I. I used similar symbols to that you were kind to propose me. The symbols are based upon the antigenic structure of cell wall and the phage sensitivity or resistancy of variant.

You were as kind as to refer in your letter to that there is some interest that "rough" isolates are also non-motile. I have tried to select motile "reversion" from these cultures but my all attempts failed so far. I had an opportunity to meet Dr. Stocker at London this spring and discuss about this very question. The flagellar transduction by temperate phages is out of question for the "rough" isolates are entirely resistant to phages.

The note which you enclosed to your letter is extremely interesting. I was always of the opinion that the L-form are not a special live-cycle of bacteria and the whole mysterious business of "filtrable form" of bacteria is coming off the misin-

terpretation of experiments the results of which were due either to some technical error or due to an "degenerative" development of cells. A part of the Soviet authors and their young, and eager followers here still of the opinion that there is a non organized form of "living material", and this form of life, also the "filtrable bacteria". After downfall of Bosjahn, Lepesinszkaja and Lisenko, this theory of "filtrable bacteria" is not much attractive to the people who advocate it as it was before. Your observation and interpretation of the nature of L-forms, therefore, is more than mere scientific fact; it is "philosophy".

The addresses requested by you: J. VADASZ, Egyetemi Szövetési Intézet, BUDAPEST IX. Tüzoltó utca; Prof. J. HORVÁTH, Agrártudományi Egyetem, GÖDÖLLŐ, Hungary.

With all good wishes for the new year.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. G. Ivánovics